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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION DELEGATION LOBBIES CONGRESS FOR FASTER FREIGHT, CLEANER AIR

WASHINGTON, D.C –A delegation of transportation leaders from the six counties that make up the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) met with congressional representatives this week to advocate for its 2006 Consensus Program, a mutually agreed upon package of projects that prioritizes faster freight and cleaner air. As a global gateway for freight, Southern California feeds the national economy, but it receives an excessive share of the impacts resulting from trade-related congestion and not enough federal funding. The delegation advocated for projects that would maintain the balance between the demand for goods movement and the health of Southern California’s rapidly growing population.

“With recent announcements by President Bush in his State of the Union Address and the ongoing goods movement efforts of the Schwarzenegger administration, the country has recognized the tremendous potential of an improved Southern California goods movement system on the nation’s economy,” said Port Hueneme City Councilmember and SCAG President Toni Young. “Our delegation has presented a package of infrastructure projects that will enable our local and national economies to prosper.”

The package of projects in the Consensus Program include funding requests for:

- Upgrades for the Gerald Desmond Bridge and Port of Hueneme
- Completion of the Alameda Corridor East project
- Completion and improvements to I-405 and I-5 HOV lanes
- Connections to Orange/Riverside highways between the I-15 and SR-241, as well as SR-55 and SR-91
- Extensions and Corridor Studies for Metro Gold Line Foothill and Metro Gold Line Eastside
- Development of a “Sealed Corridor Program” with grade separations and other hard barriers for the Metrolink line between Los Angeles and Glendale
- Construction of a Foothill transit park and ride facility

“Our package was received positively by our congressional leaders, and we hope that our message will translate into real dollars coming back to Southern California,” said Yvonne B. Burke, Los Angeles county supervisor, SCAG 1st vice president and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board Member.

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In addition to Young and Burke, the Southern California Consensus delegation was represented by:

- Hon. Harry Baldwin, San Gabriel mayor and SCAG regional councilmember
- Hon. Art Brown, Buena Park mayor pro tem; Metrolink chair; Orange County Transportation Authority chair
- Hon. Victor Carrillo, Imperial County supervisor; Imperial Valley Association of Governments
- Hon. Judy Mikels, Ventura county supervisor
- Hon. John Proctor, Santa Paula city councilmember; Ventura County Transportation Commission chair
- Hon. Ron Roberts, Temecula mayor; Riverside County Transportation Commission chair
- Roger Snoble, Los Angeles County MTA CEO
- David Solow, Southern California Regional Rail Authority CEO
- Jennifer Franco, San Bernardino Associated Governments
- Fran Inman, Majestic Realty; Mobility 21 Coalition executive committee
- Mark Pisano, SCAG executive director

The group met with members of the Southern California congressional delegation and other transportation leaders on Capitol Hill during their trip to Washington this week, including:

- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure
- Rep. James Oberstar (D- Minnesota)
- Rep. Thomas Petri (D- Wisconsin)
- Rep. Peter DeFazio (D- Oregon)
- Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Michigan)
- Rep. John Mica (R- Florida)
- Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Redlands), Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
- U.S. Senator James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma)
- Rachel Miller (Staff to Senator Dianne Feinstein)
- Laurie Saroff (Staff to Senator Barbara Boxer)

In addition to presenting the Consensus Program to congressional leaders, the regional delegation also presented its priorities to the majority staff directors of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee and Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, as well as members of the Federal Highway Administration and the State of California's transportation counsel.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information about the Southern California Consensus Program or to obtain a copy of the Consensus document, please call Jeff Lustgarten of Cerrell Associates at 323/466-3445]